



Western South Dakota Outdoor Report

Wildlife Division Region 1
February 6, 2015



Region 1 Wildlife Report

North District

DATE: 02-05-2015

Butte/Lawrence/Meade/Perkins Counties

Reporting Officers: DCOS Mike Aplan, WCO Bill Eastman. WCO Keith Mutschler, WCO Ross Fees, WCO Fred Hein

Fishing -



With this year's winter weather, anglers need to pay special attention to current ice conditions. Remember ice conditions can change rapidly and may be different from your last trip out. Check ice before venturing out, look for open water, and avoid pressure ridges.

- **Butte County**
 - **Belle Fourche Res/Orman** – Earlier reports suggested a strong winter walleye bite.
- **Lawrence**
 - Angler success has been hit or miss.
- **Meade County**
 - **Bear butte lake** - Activity has been slow. Anglers should use caution as ice has started to deteriorate.
 - **Ft Meade** – Ice has started to deteriorate. A few people have reported catching perch and a few bass.

- **Durkee Lake** – Limited angler reports, but the few that have tried their luck have been able to catch a few northern pike.
- **Perkins County**
 - **Shadehill Reservoir** - Ice is unstable and caution should be used. All the heaves that were open have froze over and are hard to see with the recent snow.
 - **Flat Creek** – Ice appears to be honeycombed in several areas. A few nice northern pike have been caught in the past week.
 - **Others** - Some of our smaller stock dams had open water on them this past week. Most of this water has frozen over. The ice is unstable and caution should be used when on the ice.

Region 1 Wildlife Report

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Sorum – Ice appears to be honeycombed in several areas

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Hunting Report:



Waterfowl – The Canada goose season is only open in Unit 2 (review unit boundary map). Unit 2 season dates are Nov 3 – Feb 15. Good geese numbers are hanging around Shadehill, but are flying late in the day.

Small Game – No report

Big Game – No report



Other Seasons - This year's bobcat season comes to a close on Feb 15. Once the season has closed, an individual has 24hr to notify a conservation officer or wildlife damage specialist of any untagged bobcats harvested during the season. Coyote numbers seem up this year and comparing gas prices low to fur prices, hunters are enjoying the challenge of harvesting coyotes.

Land Report: This time of the year the department is signing up land for next years public hunting programs. If interested in learning more about such programs contact your local conservation officer.

Misc.

- **HuntSafe** – Classes are currently being scheduled across the state. Visit the GFP website under outdoor learning to check for upcoming classes in your area. If you don't see a class in your area, check periodically for updates to come.

Things to Remember:

- Backcountry roads when wet are a mess. Please avoid tearing up roads and private driveways when possible.
- Hunters please remember baiting wildlife for the purpose of hunting is illegal. Step up to the challenge, don't bait.
- All hunters should review recent regulation updates before entering the field.
- Land locked public land can be accessed by section line rights-of-way, but it is always best to ask landowners permission before accessing such lands.
- With the bobcat season opening soon, trappers and hunters are encouraged to review the regulations and new season dates.

Check GFP website for the many other planned events and classes for your area.

- Lion hunters are having minimal success. The conditions couldn't be better for a quality hunt.
- Lots of hunters out calling predators with some reporting success mainly on coyotes.

Please read the Western Lakes Regulations when fishing due to the changes of limits and sizes of fish in each lake.

DATE: 1/21/2015

Fishing Activity: Western South Dakota

Black Hills area lakes and streams:

Waggoner: Reports of perch being active with a few crappie, bluegill and bass mixed in. Lots of moving around required.

New Wall: Reports of limits of crappie being caught on small minnows and wax worms.

Pactola: Lake trout are biting in the Jenny Gulch area.

Sheridan: Perch are being caught in the bays in 22-25ft of water on bright colored jigs and spikes.

Tisdale: Reports of people catching a few bass on shiners.



Exercise caution. Practice Safety! Ice anglers should be cognizant of ice depths before venturing onto a frozen body of water. Water movement, vegetation and snow cover will cause ice thicknesses to be extremely variable, especially during above normal temperatures. Like all outdoor activities, ice anglers must assume personal responsibility for their own safety.

crappies being caught.

Flat Creek – Ice between 10 and 14 inches, a few walleye and northern being caught.

Sorum - Ice between 10 and 14 inches, a few walleye and perch being caught.

Bear butte lake- Anglers are having minimal success catching perch and the occasional bass through the ice. Anglers are having some success at Ft. Meade reservoir catching perch. ***Please be aware of the varying ice conditions.***

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Central District

(SE Lawrence, S Meade, C Pennington, E Pennington, Haakon, N Jackson, NE Custer)

Reporting Officers: WCO's Brainard, Edwards, Geigle, Keeton, Thomsen

DCOS McCormick

Wildlife:



Elk: Closed
Deer: Closed
Small Game: Closed

Region 1 Wildlife Report

Southern District

Date: 2/2/2015

County: **Bennett/East Shannon/South Jackson**

Reporting Officer: WCO Tom Beck

Fishing Activity:

What a change a week makes in this country. Last week I was reminding fishermen not to drive on dirt trails going into private and public waters as they would be damaged which could result in closure of the fishery or closure of the trail. This week gave us a shot of winter again complete with very cold weather and a little snow. Fortunately it looks like it will be back to mud by the end of the week. Obviously with weather like this, the angling has suffered. Nothing new to report on fish being caught around the area at this time though.



Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – The ducks and geese are spending a lot of time going north one week and south the next. Last week we had lots and lots of geese and an assortment of ducks sitting on all of the open water areas in fields. This week the spots are frozen over and some of the birds have headed back to open water areas further south. I expect waterfowl numbers to increase again with the warming temperatures at the end of the week. It would be a great time to view waterfowl. For the snow goose hunters, no signs of any in this country yet.

Small Game – Not a lot to report on small game at this time. The last cold spell was pretty minimal and not a problem for upland game as food was readily available again. Lets keep hoping for a good spring and summer which gets our pheasant population a little closer to the good old days we had a few years ago.

A few more bobcats have been checked in this area. Most of what I've checked in have come out of Shannon County while a few have come from Jackson County. I have not checked in any from Bennett County yet.

Since I'm writing this on groundhog day, I cannot help but mention the wily wood chuck. As far as I know, we do not have any in this area so we have to rely on groundhogs back east to see their shadows. We still do have some prairie dogs here and there, although many ranchers in Shannon County continue to tell me their towns have been wiped out by plague. There is some evidence of plague in the surrounding counties also. A am still

seeing some active small towns on private land and they are out during the warm spells. Please remember to get permission prior to hunting them.

Big Game – A mountain lion was harvested by a rancher east of Martin in a cattle yard this week. It was a two or three year old male weighing 98 lbs. It had not killed any livestock, but was very close to a cow giving birth when it was shot. The rancher tagged the cat, had it checked in as required by law, and is keeping it.

The elk that had been hitting the stackyards north of Martin have moved away from the stacks when the warm weather melted the heavy snow cover. Hopefully they stay where they are and do not create any more issues. Deer have also moved back some from their traditional wintering areas. There are still a few reports of illegal deer hunting going on. I would appreciate a call if you witness a violation or even suspect something may be wrong. We met recently to start the season proposal phase for elk. Basically this means that the Game Manager meets with the local Conservation Officer and other staff to discuss a proposal for each unit. After that proposal is ironed out, it will go on to upper staff levels for consideration and changes, then ultimately to the Commission. While it is too early to address individual unit changes, it looks like we may see more elk tags in many of the units this fall. The elk herds are looking healthy and it should be a good year for elk hunters.

District Report- Just a quick reminder that the 2014 licenses expired January 31st. Anyone hunting, fishing, or trapping needs to pick up a 2015 license prior to going. They can be purchased online or at some sporting stores.



Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – While most waterfowl hunting opportunities are over, it is a good time to watch geese and swans. Quite a few Canadian Geese have moved back into the area to take advantage of the run off and ponding in the fields.

Small Game – The warm weather has helped upland game considerably. A lot of the snow has melted making access to food good again for the birds. Hopefully we are done with the nasty storms for the year and the rest of the winter will be mild.

Big Game – There has been some dispersal of deer from their wintering areas again as the weather warmed up. Unfortunately there has also been a couple of reports of illegal deer hunting. If you witness a wildlife crime or even suspect some activity may be occurring, please give me a call. You may also call the TIPS Hotline if you cannot get hold of me.

Thank you for exercising fair chase hunting practices; securing permission to hunt on private property and helping to police our hunting heritage. Officers this fall have received handfuls of great calls regarding illegal hunting issues including baiting big game, shooting from motor

vehicles, shooting from public roads, and failure to tag big game. Thank you for your support and observations.

If you witness hunting violations, you may choose to remain anonymous and assist officers by calling the TIPS hotline. The number is printed on the front cover of the 2014 fishing and hunting handbooks. Do your best to collect the license number of the vehicle involved? Your call will assist officers with making contact with the individuals involved and changing their future hunting behavior. Illegal hunting behavior is destructive to the future of our hunting heritage.

Waterfowl:



Unit 2 Canada Goose season is currently open. Waterfowl hunting opportunities are limited in the central west river zone.

District Report- I understand the female otter was found dead on LaCreek yesterday. At this point we do not know the cause of the death, but she will likely be examined to determine what killed her.

Furbearers:

Coyote hunters have been struggling to find good coyotes. Bobcat trappers will struggle to find good bobcats this year. No word yet on fur prices.

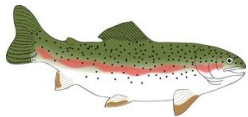
If you have any information please call TIPS at 1-888-OVERBAG or your local Sheriff's Office. Making the call can prevent poachers from stealing YOUR public resource!

Date: 2/2/2015

County: West Custer/West Pennington

Reporting Officer: WCO Jacob Ehlert

Fishing: With warm temps, fishing was slow and Ice melted significantly at lower elevation ponds. At higher elevations, Ice is still good but fishing has been slow. I expect it to improve as we move later into February.



Big Game: Lion hunters had a dusting to work with on super bowl Sunday. Lots of people out, very few tracks seen.

Furbearers:

Bobcats are starting to pick up, I expect a few more before the season ends.

If you have any information please call TIPS at 1-888-OVERBAG or your local Sheriff's Office. Making the call can prevent poachers from stealing YOUR public resource!

Date: 2/3/2015

County: East Custer/South Pennington

Reporting Officer: WCO Ron Tietz

Fishing Activity:

The warming trend the last couple weeks has had its toll on ice conditions. Most ice in this area is still in good shape, but please use extreme caution when venturing on the ice.

Sylvan and Legion lake have been producing some nice rainbows and the perch are biting at Stockade lake.

Lakota, Bismarck and Horse thief lakes have all been drained for the fall and winter, some fish have been removed and transferred to other waters. Work on cleaning out the sediment has begun at Bismarck with Lakota lake next on the list. We have also started the planning process on what species of fish to stock in these waters once they fill up. There will be some public input meetings to follow.

Big Game:

Mountain lion season is in full swing and conditions have started out great. We have completed almost 7 weeks of the season and 18 lions have been taken (as of this writing).

The season will end March 31 or when the quota of 75 lions or 50 female lions is met.

The 1st session of the limited hound access lion hunt in Custer State Park produced 1 mature female mountain lion taken in the bear gulch area of the Park. The second hound interval will start Feb. 5th. This is a unique opportunity for hunters to hunt lions with the use of hounds. Lions taken in CSP will be counted in the quota.

The GFP commission adopted a rule to allow the use of hounds to hunt mountain lions on the prairie outside of the Black Hills.

Please be respectful of private property, we have been busy taking calls in regards to hunters trespassing on private lands this fall.

District Report:

And as always, if you witness a wildlife violation, try to get as much information as you can and call your local Wildlife Conservation Officer or the tips hotline.

1-888-683-7224.



Waterfowl hunters need to be aware that it is illegal to hunt near the Fall River Feedlot - - it would be a violation of the “baiting” regulations. Please read your hunting handbook to refresh on the rules.

District Report:

Please take the time to record a license number and vehicle description when you witness a fish or game violation. Don’t hesitate to call the TIP’s Hotline or the local Sheriff’s Office and report the violators. You will help us all preserve the sport!!

2/3/2015

County: Fall River

Reporting Officer: WCO DJ Schroeder

Fishing Activity:



Fishermen should be very careful with the ice at Angostura and Coldbrook Reservoir - - some of the ice is not very good. Anglers are catching a few fish - - but activity has been very limited the past couple of weeks.

Hunting Report:



Small Game: There are a few hunters going after cottontails on the GPAs. Not seeing much other activity. Most game is doing well this winter. The mild temperatures showing up every other week is keeping the snow cover down and helping make for a moderate winter.

Big Game: Lion hunters have picked up a few tracks in the area - - but struggle to kill lions down south. Usually issues with pursuing the lion across private property. Snow conditions are also pretty bad down this way.

Trapping/Furbearers --- We a few more bobcats harvested the last couple of weeks. The dry weather seems to get the cats moving a little more. Coyote hunters are still having fun out there - but it is getting harder and more challenging to call them in as we get later into the season.

Land Report:

Trappers should be reminded that you must obtain permission to trap on Walk-In-Areas. Game, Fish and Parks is only leasing the hunting rights - - not the trapping privileges.

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Hunting Report:



Small Game: Waterfowl hunters are still finding some goose hunting opportunities in certain areas. Duck season is over – so the “pressure” is going to be less in the area. Most of the area water has iced over now and the birds are spending a lot of time in the fields.

Trapping/Furbearers --- Started seeing some bobcats harvested. The recent weather has made trapping a little more challenging. Those hunting bobcats need to remember that they must have the furbearer license to legally harvest one. Several coyote hunters in the area calling and driving around the public areas.

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